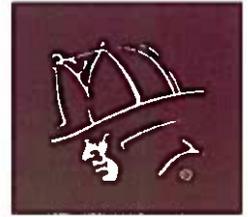


# Houston Firefighters' Relief and Retirement Fund

*Investing for Firefighters and Their Families®*



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July 22, 2019

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The Honorable Kevin Brady  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
1011 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Brady:

I am writing on behalf of the approximately 7,300 active and retired City of Houston firefighters who are members of the Houston Firefighters' Relief and Retirement Fund (HFRRF). As Pension Board Chair, I am involved in many issues that are related to the HFRRF pension plan, including the Social Security program.

On a number of occasions, I have visited with you and other Members of the Texas Congressional Delegation to discuss the Windfall Elimination Program (WEP). I appreciate your continued leadership on this important issue.

The current one-size-fits-all approach of the WEP penalty is unfair to many retirees. It is an arbitrary calculation that does not take into account a retiree's actual work history. The legislation you plan to introduce this week would be a significant improvement. I strongly support this bill.

The legislation would divide the universe into three categories:

Group 1: Those age 60 and older would continue to be hit by the WEP penalty but would receive a \$100 monthly rebate (\$50 for spousal benefit).

Group 2: Ages 59 to 21 would receive the higher of current law or the new proportional formula, which would ensure that each worker's actual work history is used in determining the benefit. This means that anyone in the workforce today, as long as they are age 21, would be able to be completely exempt from WEP through the substantial earnings exemption.

Group 3: Ages 20 and younger would have their Social Security benefit calculated under the proportional formula.

Resolving the WEP offset issue is of critical importance to many families in the Houston area. We strongly support your efforts.

Sincerely,  
  
Brett Besselman  
Board Chair